

# Inclusive Education

## Inclusive, Engaging and Respectful Schools

The NSW Department of Education is committed to building a more inclusive education system. Under the Disability Strategy, inclusive education in NSW is defined as ‘all students, regardless of disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, nationality, language, gender, sexual orientation or faith, can access and fully participate in learning, alongside their similar aged peers, supported by reasonable adjustments and teaching strategies tailored to meet their individual needs. Inclusion is embedded in all aspects of school life, and is supported by culture, policies and everyday practices.’

### The initiative

The Inclusive Education Policy for students with disability clarifies roles and responsibilities for all staff delivering inclusive education. Our legal responsibilities have not changed since the [Disability Standards for Education 2005](#).

This overview should be read in conjunction with the policy that outlines the individual responsibilities and delegations of department staff.

### Principles of inclusive practice



#### 1. Student agency and self-determination

Students are supported to express their views. The capacity of students to solve problems, set goals, make decisions and self-advocate is valued and developed.



#### 2. Parent and carer inclusion

Parents and carers are engaged as partners to achieve the best outcomes for their child's education.



#### 3. Social and cultural inclusion

All students are welcomed, supported to belong and build relationships with their peers.



#### 4. Curriculum inclusion

Students are supported to access the curriculum with individualised goals and high aspirations.



#### 5. Workforce capability for inclusion

Teachers are supported to provide adjustments and differentiate their teaching for the diversity of students in their class.



#### 6. System inclusion

Inclusion is embedded across all parts of our system in culture, policies and everyday practices.

## Rationale for change

We are introducing the policy because we've heard from students, families and staff that there is more we can do to improve learning and wellbeing. While we have seen great examples of inclusive practice across NSW public schools, there are opportunities to strengthen practice and consistency.

### What's changing

- A new policy that clarifies existing legal obligations and roles and responsibilities.
- New support for teachers and school leaders including universal evidence-based practice resources, professional learning and a new tool to support school planning.
- The policy supersedes:
  - People with Disabilities - Statement of Commitment
  - Assisting Students with Learning Difficulties Policy.

### What's not changing

- Roles and responsibilities of teaching and non-teaching staff.
- Department responsibilities under the Disability Standards for Education.
- Definition of inclusion and position on specialist settings.



4x ↑

*Demand for disability support is growing at four times the rate of enrolment growth.*

## What the change means



For schools

All NSW Public Schools will:

- Champion inclusive education
- Ensure understanding of obligations and correct implementation of the policy
- Refer to the policy for the individual responsibilities and delegations – there are no additional responsibilities for school staff
- Strengthen practice by using the new support resources
- Ensure inclusion is addressed in school plans.



For students,  
parents and carers

Students and their families should experience:

- Greater confidence that every child is welcomed and included in all parts of school life, and are able to reach their full potential
- Greater clarity on the rights of students and parents and carers
- Greater clarity on the roles of the department for delivering inclusive education.

## Foundational practice

### All staff must:

- implement reasonable adjustments for students with disability to support them to enrol and participate in all aspects of school life, on the same basis as students without disability.
- consult students, or their parents or carers on reasonable adjustments.
- support students with disability to access the curriculum through reasonable adjustments, and personalised support.
- contribute to an education environment free from harassment and unlawful discrimination on the basis of disability. They must develop and implement strategies to prevent harassment and victimisation of students with disability.

## Effective practice

### All staff should:

- work in partnership with students, parents and carers, external service providers, and the community, to achieve the best outcomes for students with disability.
- support students, parents and carers with key transition points.
- model inclusive practice to promote social and cultural inclusion of students with disability.
- participate in professional learning about supporting the inclusion of students with disability.

***Inclusion** means education environments that adapt the design and physical structures, teaching methods, and curriculum as well as the culture, policy and practice of education environments so that they are accessible to all students without discrimination.*

*A **reasonable adjustment** is an action taken to enable a student with disability to participate in education on the same basis as other students, when it is the product of consultation and seeks to balance the interests of all parties.*

## Further information and support

We are focused on supporting all NSW public schools, parents and carers, the community, and corporate staff with ongoing support for implementation. We encourage you to utilise the extensive range of **existing, expanded and new supports** available.

For more information visit the Department website.